matter was further discussed, and we decided to put forward in the last resort the suggestion

A compromise suggested

of restoring the ships to America after the War, or of time-chartering them. A communication in this sense was wired to Northcliffe, who replied :—

" I hear from House that he is corresponding with the President about confiscation of the ships.

Your letter and parts of one which I wrote to House have been handed to President. Untiring work being done by Royden. Should the vessels be saved in part or entirely, it will all be due to his tireless efforts and unquenchable good humour. He is a tower of strength to this mission, and I trust I may keep him permanently with us/[5]

Unhappily, despite our appeals and the strenuous efforts of Northcliffe and Royden in America, the

'America decides to confiscate and ... ships

influences antagonistic to British shipping interests won the day with the President, which were then building for British orders in the States were confiscated by the American Government and added to its Government Fleet. The authorities there cherished an ambitious project of developing a large, nationally-owned mercantile marine. Before the War, America possessed about one-eighth the sea-going merchant tonnage that Britain had, but during the latter part

of the War
the Emergency Fleet which she con-
A post-War structed grew until it was far greater,
liability aiike, jn numbers and in tonnage, than
the privately-owned American shipping.
But the post-War history of this fleet has not been